

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT FUNDS WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, April 6, 2004 – 1:30 p.m.
MAG Office Building, Suite 200 - Cholla Room
302 North First Avenue, Phoenix

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilman Greg Stanton, Co-Chair, Phoenix
Mike Hutchinson, Co-Chair, Mesa,
representing the MAG Management
Committee

Grant Anderson, Goodyear, representing the
MAG Street Committee

Angela Dye, A Dye Design, representing the
American Society of Landscape
Architects, Arizona Chapter

*Marcie Ellis, West Valley Fine Arts Council,
representing the Arts Community

Reed Kempton, Maricopa County Dept. of
Transportation, representing the MAG
Pedestrian Working Group

*Andre Licardi, Arizona Commission of the
Arts

Mary O'Connor, Scottsdale, representing the
MAG Regional Bicycle Task Force

Doug Kupel, Arizona Preservation Foundation,
representing the Archaeological and
Historic Preservation Community

* Not Present

OTHERS PRESENT

Phil Jeselnick, ADOT
Melinda Brimhall, Chandler
Brian Townsend, Gilbert

Dawn M. Coomer, MAG
Tom Remes, MAG

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Mike Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m.

2. Approval of the August 5, 2003 Meeting Minutes of the Enhancement Funds Working Group

Angela Dye moved to approve the August 5, 2003 meeting minutes of the Enhancement Funds Working Group. Grant Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction of Working Group Members and Members of the Audience

Members of the Working Group and audience introduced themselves.

4. Call to the Audience

No members of the audience wished to address the Working Group.

5. Staff Report

Dawn Coomer addressed the Working Group. Ms. Coomer reminded Working Group members of the projects submitted last year for transportation enhancement funding and noted that only two projects were funded: both the highest priority project and the lowest ranked project. Ms. Coomer noted that only 10 percent of the funding available was received by the MAG region last year. Ms. Coomer stated that PAG had received almost 30 percent of the available funding, CAAG had received approximately 15 percent of the funding and the SEAGO area had received almost 14 percent of the funding. Ms. Coomer added that over the 11 year life of the Transportation Enhancement Program, the MAG region had received approximately 20 percent of the funding available. PAG and NACOG have received similar amounts, and the rural councils of governments had received lesser amounts. Ms. Coomer concluded her presentation by showing a line chart indicating the percentage of funding received by the MAG region for each year of the Transportation Enhancement Program.

Grant Anderson asked why the amount of funding to the MAG region was so low, and why the priorities of the region were ignored. Ms. Coomer responded that many of those on the committee feel that the MAG region has sufficient funding for these kind of projects and that the money would be better used by rural areas. Ms. Coomer added that the state committee did not understand why a safety project was placed last on the MAG priority list. Mr. Anderson stated that there were other safety projects on the list, including the Fountain Hills project. Why was that project not liked by the committee? Ms. Coomer stated that the committee skipped over many excellent projects with demonstrated regional impact. Ms. Coomer added that this issue would be discussed as another agenda item.

Co-Chair Hutchinson asked about the membership of the state committee. Ms. Coomer responded that members vote from MAG and PAG each year, and that there are other members from state agencies representing historic preservation and state parks. Also, rural councils of governments have rotating votes; three vote each year. Mr. Anderson asked who that MAG representative was, and Ms. Coomer noted that she attended all the meetings. Co-Chair Stanton serves to represent the MAG region, but he was unable to attend the meeting last year. In prior years, Phil Gordon, who was co-chair of the Working Group, had represented projects in the MAG region.

Co-Chair Stanton added that the Working Group should discuss who should represent projects from the MAG region to the state committee. Perhaps another member would be more effective at obtaining more funding for the MAG region. With those comments, Co-Chair Stanton suggested moving on and saving this discussion for the future agenda item.

6. Schedule for Round XII Transportation Enhancement Funds

Ms. Coomer addressed the Working Group, noting that MAG has been notified by ADOT that Round XII Enhancement Fund applications are due to ADOT in September, 2004. A schedule of enhancement fund activities was provided as an attachment to the meeting agenda. Ms. Coomer stated she could address any questions on this item.

Co-Chair Stanton asked if any changes were made in the schedule from prior years? Ms. Coomer stated that the schedule is similar to prior years. A transportation enhancement workshop will be held on April 19th to explain the process to potential applicants. Applications will be due approximately six weeks later on May 28th. The applications will be forwarded to members of the Working Group for review prior to the review meeting. The Working Group will also hold an additional meeting to rank the applications. A tentative meeting has been scheduled in case the committee cannot address all business in two meetings. Then, the recommendations of the Working Group will be forwarded to Management Committee and Regional Council for approval.

Hearing no additional questions, Co-Chair Stanton moved to the next agenda item.

7. Changes in the MAG Public Comment Process for Committees

Ms. Coomer addressed the Working Group. She explained that the Enhancement Funds Working Group adopted a procedural approach for the review and ranking of transportation enhancement funds in the MAG region in March, 2002. In addition, MAG has a standard process for public input that is formalized at the Management Committee and Regional Council meetings. Since the adoption of the Working Group process, the Chair of the Regional Council has requested that all MAG committees have a standardized policy for public comment. Staff is requesting that members of the Working Group were requested to amend their procedural approach to ensure consistency with the adopted MAG public comment process for committees.

Ms. Coomer explained that under the system adopted by the Working Group, public comment at the ranking meeting was limited to a general public comment period at the beginning of the meeting. The revised system would allow public comment at two points in the meeting. Audience members could address the Working Group during the "Call to the Audience" agenda item on any topic. Audience members could again address the Working Group prior to action taken to rank applications. Comments could be limited to three minutes per speaker, and be taken at the beginning of the agenda item rather than just prior to the action being taken. Ms. Coomer concluded by noting that the Working Group was being asked to approve the revised approach, as included in Agenda Attachment B, for the review and ranking of transportation enhancement funds in the MAG region. Ms. Coomer offered to take questions from the Working Group.

Co-Chair Stanton asked for questions from the Working Group. Hearing none, Co-Chair Stanton requested a motion. Grant Anderson moved to approve the revised approach for the

review and ranking of transportation enhancement funds in the MAG region. Reed Kempton seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Issues to Discuss at the Mid-Year ADOT Transportation Enhancement Review Committee Meeting

Ms. Coomer addressed the Working Group. She explained that the Working Group is being asked to identify and discuss issues related to transportation enhancement funds that should be discussed at the mid-year meeting of the ADOT Transportation Enhancement Review Committee (TERC). The meeting is tentatively scheduled for late April or early May, 2004. Dates received yesterday from ADOT staff indicate that a meeting is likely on May 3 or May 5.

Ms. Coomer continued by noting that several have expressed concerns that only 10 percent of the total from Round XI went to projects in the MAG region. In addition, the TERC appeared to ignore regional priorities by selecting both the highest and lowest ranked projects for funding. Ms. Coomer noted that major issues were provided on the screen at the front of the room, and suggested that each be discussed by the Working Group. One issue for discussion is whether to limit the number of applications submitted to ADOT, and not giving the state committee a choice in which projects to select. Ms. Coomer added that this approach might put some additional pressure on the Working Group. Ms. Coomer asked Co-Chair Stanton to lead the discussion.

Doug Kupel asked how other MPOs and COGs rank projects. Ms. Coomer noted that the process varies throughout the state. She stated that PAG has a formal process with an evaluation committee. Some of the rural areas of the state don't have a ranking process and submit all applications without ranking to the state committee, and then provide some input for the benefit of the state committee at the annual ranking meeting.

Co-Chair Hutchinson noted that the TERC needs to be informed about our process. Ms. Coomer agreed, and suggested that members of the Working Group attend the mid-year TERC meeting scheduled for late April or early May. Tentative dates at this time are May 3 and May 5. Co-Chair Stanton asked Ms. Coomer to provide the date to Working Group members as soon as it was available, and Ms. Coomer affirmed that she would.

Angela Dye asked who oversaw the priorities at the state committee. Co-Chair Stanton stated that a fair share of funding is needed. What about providing the state committee with only the highest priorities in the region? He added that another issue is that the set-aside funding is getting bigger. Co-Chair Stanton suggested that more representation at the state committee is needed.

Ms. Coomer explained that the recommendations of the TERC are forwarded to the State Transportation Board for approval. Ms. Coomer added that Co-Chair Stanton was speaking about the projects of opportunities funds at ADOT, which has been doubled over the past few years.

Co-Chair Hutchinson asked what a project of opportunity was? Ms. Coomer said that because the process for use of these funds is different, members of the TERC often don't know what projects are being funded using set-aside funding. Information on how set-aside projects are selected and which projects are funded is needed before the state committee meets to rank and evaluate projects.

Ms. Dye suggested that the entire TERC might be concerned about the set-aside issue and this might be a point of agreement in negotiations. Co-Chair Stanton stated that he thinks other areas of the state do fine under the set-aside process and have no desire to change the process.

Ms. Dye added that data on who obtains set aside funds is needed. Regions who obtain these set aside funds should not be obtaining regular enhancement funds too. Ms. Coomer agreed to request the information from ADOT.

Mr. Anderson asked if a discussion with the TERC will really change the process. He suggested that discussing return on investment with the State Transportation Board. Mr. Anderson added that knowing how much funding could be obtained through the enhancement program ahead of time would be helpful.

Mary O'Connor stated that a number of years ago fair share issues had been discussed with the TERC but these discussions hadn't been successful. Mr. Anderson suggested that discussions with the State Transportation Board are needed, and that State Transportation Board members could help with this process. Ms. Coomer added that the MAG Executive Director had suggested that a letter indicating regional priorities be sent to the State Transportation Board. Typically, this letter is sent to ADOT staff when the applications are submitted. However, it is also usually signed by MAG staff. Since the priorities are MAG priorities, acted upon by the MAG Regional Council, it might be more appropriate for the Regional Council Chair to sign the priority letter.

Co-Chair Stanton asked if this item could be scheduled on an ADOT Board agenda. Ms. Coomer stated that she was unfamiliar with this process, but that she could ask ADOT staff. Ms. Coomer suggested that an important first step would be to start with a discussion with the TERC, and then move on from that point.

Co-Chair Stanton asked about limiting the number of applications submitted to ADOT. Co-Chair Stanton also suggested that the same projects, with the same ranking, be submitted again this year. Mr. Anderson stated that limiting the number of applications submitted to ADOT only works if we know how much funding is available. Mr. Anderson added that the projects may also change. Mr. Anderson stated that many applicants should resubmit their proposals this year and that the ranking of last year should be taken into account.

Ms. O'Connor stated that it would be very important to communicate with our own ADOT Board representative and provide them a briefing on this item. The ADOT Board representative could advocate for increased funding for the MAG region through the

enhancements process. Ms. O'Connor added that the state meeting should have more attendees from the MAG region, including local supporters and some citizens. Unfortunately, the location of the meetings has been problematic.

Ms. Dye stated that the Working Group needed to look at what projects were selected over the MAG projects. Year to year comparisons on what had been funded would be helpful. Also, is the record for implementing projects better in this region? Ms. Dye asked what our obligation rate was, and Ms. Coomer responded that she thought it was approximately 30 percent, but that she would have to verify that figure. Ms. Coomer added that Cheryl Banta at ADOT was working to implement more projects by increasing staffing needs. Ms. Dye stated that it will be important to show that this region's record of implementing projects is high and that the money allocated is spent and provides value to the community. In addition, the priorities of this region should be honored by the state committee. Ms. O'Connor added that showing photos of completed projects is also helpful.

Mr. Kempton asked if project match was considered by the state committee, especially with the historic bridge project submitted by Maricopa County last year. Ms. Coomer responded that cost match is considered, but it is important for applicants to not overmatch their projects, because that gives an appearance of "buying projects." Mr. Kupel added that was an excellent project in a rural area that should have been funded.

Co-Chair Stanton stated the local representatives should be asked to attend the state meetings, and that the same projects can be sent next year with the same priority as a protest of the TERC's recommendations.

Mr. Anderson stated that there may be new projects this year and some have probably already been built. He added that it will be important to send at least three or four members of this committee, along with MAG staff, to sit down with the state committee and educate them on our comprehensive evaluation process.

Mr. Kupel added that education is important as well as statistics that show the trend in prior years. Education of the State Transportation Board representatives will be important. It might also be a good idea to involve the media, since most probably have no idea that this region receives such a small portion of the available funding. Mr. Kupel stated that knowledge of projects receiving set-aside funding is also important.

Ms. Coomer added that the Working Group should be aware of this issue in a larger context. Most federal money goes to the state department of transportation in each state, and ADOT has agreements with regions in Arizona on how to distribute this money. There is a formula in place that determines funding allocated to different regions. Ms. Coomer stated that transportation enhancement funding is not included in that formula, and that the funding is removed from the top. So, this funding is probably seen as "free money" to some rural areas of the state who feel that the MAG region obtains too much funding.

Co-Chair Stanton asked Ms. Coomer if she had sufficient direction from the Working Group. Ms. Coomer stated that there appeared to be agreement that the number of applications submitted to ADOT should not be limited by the Working Group, and Mr. Anderson expressed agreement.

Ms. Coomer stated that there is also support from the Working Group to have an education process of the state committee, and that members of the Working Group should come to the mid-year TERC meeting. Ms. Coomer asked if any additional changes to the regional process should be discussed, and added that the process appears to be comprehensive, clear and fair to most persons.

Ms. Dye agreed that the current adopted process of ranking and review is reasonable. Ms. Dye suggested that ADOT be provided with rationale of the ranking in the letter sent with the project priorities.

Mr. Anderson noted that a list of projects funded in other places is needed. He added that the thinking that the MAG region has too much funding needs to change, and that impression needs to be removed. Mr. Anderson stated that the real reasoning behind the decisions needs to be understood.

Co-Chair Stanton stated that the idea of rationale might be difficult to do logistically, but that it was a good idea. Ms. Dye stated that it would be a way to add some depth to the reasoning behind the ranking. Ms. Dye suggested that many of the projects might have ranked low at the state committee due to a lack of understanding.

Ms. O'Connor noted that this regional committee uses the same criteria as the state committee does when recommending projects. Ms. O'Connor suggested that perhaps the state committee didn't use their own ranking system, and that a better understanding of "hot buttons" of the state committee is needed.

Ms. Dye stated that the state committee didn't used to like art projects. Ms. Dye emphasized the need to adequately explain projects to the state committee. Mr. Kupel cautioned against the use of rationale as a slippery slope. Mr. Kupel stated that it can be very difficult to second guess the state committee, and how is it possible to determine the real reason of their ranking? Mr. Kupel also noted that sometimes different people have different reasons for ranking the same project high.

Co-Chair Stanton stated that it would be important for members of the Working Group to attend the mid-year TERC meeting. He asked MAG staff to communicate the final dates as soon as possible.

Ms. Dye asked what is a reasonable share of funding? Co-Chair Hutchinson asked Tom Remes what he thought. Mr. Remes stated that a fair share would be difficult to determine at this point and would vary depending on other factors. Mr. Remes suggested a discussion with the state committee as a place to begin. Co-Chair Hutchinson asked what percentage

share of population resided in the MAG region, and Ms. Coomer responded that approximately 58 percent of the population in the state resides in the MAG region.

Ms. Coomer suggested that the Working Group agreed that sending a letter signed by the Regional Council chair to the State Transportation Board with MAG priorities was a good suggestion, and the Working Group agreed. Ms. O'Connor stated that it would be important to meet with State Transportation Board representatives on MAG projects and to get them involved.

Co-Chair Stanton noted that a copy of the letter should be sent to the ADOT director.

9. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting has been scheduled for **Friday, June 18 at 8:30 a.m. in the MAG Cholla Room**. Committee members will focus on the review of applications submitted for Round XII.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40.